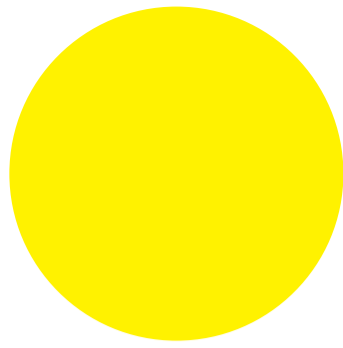


Iran greenlights 90 foreign investment proposals valued at \$617m

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# Iran Daily

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Civil defense members extinguish a fire following Israeli bombardment on a building in the village of Saksakiyeh in southern Lebanon on June 6, 2026.

AFP

### Lebanese officials swayed by US pressure and false promises

#### INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

As significant parts of Lebanon remain under Israeli attack and occupation, Lebanese officials have recently accused Iran of interfering in the country's affairs and using Lebanon as leverage in its negotiations with the United States. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejected the accusation, urging Lebanese leaders to save their country from its "real enemy." Iran Daily discussed the issue with Hassan Hanizadeh,



Hassan Hanizadeh

an expert on Middle East affairs, who argued that Lebanese officials have adopted these positions under US pressure and the lure of false promises from Washington. According to him, this approach could ultimately push Lebanon toward civil war, providing Israel with a pretext to advance further into Lebanese territory under the guise of restoring security.

**IRAN DAILY:** Why has the Lebanese government directed its criticism toward Iran rather than Israel? What role have external actors and international pressure played in shaping this approach?

**HANIZADEH:** The recent approach adopted by Lebanese officials reflects a new scenario designed to exert pressure from within while bargaining from abroad. This indicates that coordinated efforts are underway to pressure Hezbollah and disarm what is essentially a defensive Islamic-national movement. These efforts involve certain domestic Lebanese factions, the United States, some Arab countries in the region, and Israel itself. Unfortunately, both President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam have, under US pressure and a series of false incentives from Washington, entered into a political atmosphere that, if allowed to continue, could ultimately lead Lebanon toward civil war. Given that Lebanon's economy is fundamentally dependent on the United States, European countries, and certain Arab states, it is natural that attractive but ultimately deceptive promises have been offered to the Lebanese government by Washington and its regional allies—promises that are unlikely to materialize.

Moreover, the Lebanese government's silence regarding the killing of civilians in southern Lebanon reflects a sectarian outlook among parts of Lebanon's ruling establishment and some Arab governments toward the people of the south. Since many residents of southern Lebanon belong to the Shiite community, few political forces in Lebanon or the Arab world have come forward in their support. Many have remained indifferent to their suffering. Some Arab states, because of this sectarian perspective, have effectively lined up alongside Israel and provided logistical and financial assistance to the Israeli military. Iran and Hezbollah, on the other hand, have always viewed the issue from a humanitarian, Islamic, and moral standpoint. Tehran has invested considerable resources in supporting all segments of Lebanese society—whether Maronite Christians, Muslims, or Druze. Yet today, Lebanon's leadership, particularly the president and prime minister, appears determined to use both domestic and external pressure to disarm Hezbollah.

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# IRGC strikes US bases in Kuwait, Bahrain after anti-Iran attacks

## Tehran raps US aggression as 'flagrant' breach of ceasefire

### International Desk

Iran launched a salvo of missiles at US military bases in Bahrain and Kuwait on Saturday in response to renewed American strikes on the country.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said in a statement that it targeted two US air bases in Kuwait and the remaining facilities of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain in response to the latest US aggression.

The IRGC said that at 1:30 am, four violating oil tankers, instigated and guided by the aggressive American army and without coordination or attention to repeated warnings from the IRGC Navy, attempted to illegally exit the Strait of Hormuz.

Following warnings, one of the tankers was targeted and stopped, and the other violating vessels turned back, it said. According to the statement, following this incident, at 02:30 a.m., American drones struck a telecommunications mast on Qeshm Island and another mast in Sirik with two projectiles. It added that in response to the Amer-

ican onslaught, the IRGC's Aerospace Force immediately launched ballistic missiles toward two US air bases in Kuwait, identifying one of them as Ali Al Salem, as well as important remaining facilities of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. The IRGC also warned the US that "If such acts of villainy are repeated, the response will not be limited."

Earlier, US Central Command wrote in a post on X that "moments ago, CENTCOM forces shot down four Iranian one-way attack drones that were launched toward the Strait of Hormuz."

The post claimed that the attack drones posed an immediate threat to regional maritime traffic and that US forces subsequently struck Iranian coastal surveillance radar sites in Goruk and on Qeshm Island to defend against further attacks.

It added that American forces remain postured to respond to what it called "unjustified Iranian aggression in self-defense."

**Attack on 'national sovereignty'**  
Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned

the nighttime US attack on coastal radar installations, calling it a "flagrant" violation of the ceasefire in place since April.

The ministry said it was an attack "on the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic republic," denouncing Washington's "hostile and provocative behavior." The statement also called on the regional countries to observe the principle of good neighborliness and adhere to the fundamental principle of international law that prohibits allowing aggressors to use their territory and facilities to carry out aggressive actions against other countries.

The ministry also called on the UN secretary-general, the Security Council, and other responsible international institutions to respond immediately and effectively to the continued flagrant violation of the ceasefire and the illegal action of the US.

The latest flare-up came despite a ceasefire in the war - which was trig-



gered almost 100 days ago by US and Israeli strikes on Iran - has been in place since April 8.

The exchange of fire between Iran and the US came days after the IRGC struck the giant cargo ship MSC Sariska, affiliated with the "American Zionist enemy", with a cruise missile in a reciprocal operation after a US attack on an Iranian commercial ves-

sel in the Sea of Oman.

The IRGC announced on Tuesday that the strike was a direct response to the "aggressive and treacherous attack" by the US military on the Iranian bulk carrier Lian Star.

The MSC Sariska, a Panamanian-flagged vessel, was targeted near Iraqi waters and sustained a major explosion.

## 'Save Lebanon from real foe': Araghchi hits back at Lebanese president

### International Desk

Iranian officials on Saturday reacted to recent comments made by Lebanese president about Tehran's alleged influence in the Arab country, with the foreign minister urging him to focus on Lebanon's "real foe" rather than Iran.

"Save Lebanon from your real foe, Mr. President," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X on Saturday, in response to Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's remarks during an exclusive interview with CNN a day earlier.

Referring to Israel's atrocities in Lebanon over the past years, the Iranian top diplomat noted that Aoun's comments overlooked the primary threat facing Lebanon and misidentified the source of the country's current challenges.

"Based on Mr. Aoun's comments, one would think it is Iran that has occupied one-fifth of Lebanon, displaced one-quarter of the Lebanese people, and is bombing his country on a daily basis," Araghchi said.

### 'Bargaining chip'

He further rejected Aoun's claim that Iran was using Lebanon as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the United States, saying, "Had Lebanon been a bargaining chip for Iran, we would have reached a deal long ago."

In the CNN interview on Friday, Aoun delivered a message to Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), saying "It's not your country, it's our country," after the chief commander of the force Brigadier General Esmaeil Qaani said the minimum demand of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement is a full Israeli withdrawal to the positions it held before the outbreak of the 40-day war.

Aoun further claimed that Iran is treating Lebanon as leverage in its talks with Washington, saying such an approach was "unacceptable."

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah began in March after the Lebanese resistance group launched military operations against the Israeli regime in response to its aggression

against Iran. A truce to halt the fighting began on April 17, but has never been observed.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei also chided Joseph Aoun for "selling out" those who stand beside him while remaining loyal to the enemies of Lebanon. In a post on X on Saturday, Baqaei endorsed earlier comments by Araghchi, in which he urged Aoun to focus on Lebanon's "real foe" rather than Iran.

"He sells out those who stand beside him and invests in those who stand against him. He abandons those who supported him and backs those who put him in a difficult position," Baqaei wrote in Arabic.

### Attack on Lebanon's Army

Despite the so-called ceasefire, Israeli aggression continues unabated. The regime's forces persist in bombing villages and towns across southern Lebanon, systematically destroying homes, public facilities, and civilian infrastructure.

On Saturday, Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon killed nine people including three members of the Lebanese military, the Lebanese Army and state media said, days after the two sides reached a new ceasefire deal brokered by the United States.

An airstrike on a vehicle on a road linking the city of Nabatiyeh with the town of Marjayoun killed a brigadier general, a captain and another soldier, the army said, without immediately releasing their names. Another airstrike on the southern village of Saksakiyah killed six people and wounded four, state-run National News Agency said.

"The continued, deliberate, and repeated Israeli aggression against Lebanon, its people and its army only strengthen our resolve, faith and determination," the army said in its statement.

The war has claimed at least 3,526 lives since March 2, according to the latest figures released by Lebanon's Health Ministry on Thursday.

## Leader's aide casts Trump as main obstacle to Iran-US talks

### International Desk

Mohsen Rezaei, a senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said that US president is the principal obstacle to progress in peace negotiations between Tehran and Washington while warning that the US would "enter into a dark corridor" if it resumes fighting.

"The ball is now in America's court. Trump is the main problem in the negotiations. He speaks ambiguously, and according to his own statements, this is his method. However, that approach does not work with Iran. He must speak clearly," Rezaei said during an interview with CNN on Friday. Negotiations are at an impasse that Trump must resolve, Rezaei added, noting that "a profound atmosphere of mistrust" currently dominates the issue of interaction between the two sides.

When told that Trump has claimed he is waiting for Iran's response to US peace proposal, Rezaei said, "Iran has clearly stated that our frozen assets should be released, but the Americans provide ambiguous responses."

He framed the demand as a trust-building measure, saying the Trump administration's potential release of the funds would be "a new horizon for the future" of Iran and America. "If he (Trump) wants to reach an agreement with Iran, this \$24 billion is a test of trust that Iran wants to have with Trump - this is a test that America must



Mohsen Rezaei

pass and the path will be opened," he said. "This is our own money, not America's money."

He also warned the United States against leading itself into a quagmire by renewing aggression against Iran.

"They know that the cost of negotiations is far lower than the cost of war. If they choose military action again, they will enter a dark and endless corridor," the former chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) told CNN.

Rezaei followed his remarks with a warning about the potential geographical consequences of such ill-advised aggression. Commenting on the US's repeatedly threatening to target Iran's infrastructure, he said, "If the war continues and the blockade persists, we will expand the conflict beyond the region, from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and the Mediterranean Sea. That would be very bad for the United States."

## Tehran rejects use of IAEA report as 'tool of political pressure'

### International Desk

Iran on Saturday denounced a report by the UN nuclear agency about access to the country's nuclear sites, saying that if the agency wants to be part of a diplomatic solution, it must refrain from turning a technical report into a tool of political pressure.

Tehran was engaged in discussions with Washington about its nuclear program when the United States and Israel attacked it on February 28, sparking war in the region.

Israel had previously struck Iran in June 2025, also while Washington and Tehran were engaged in nuclear negotiations, with Washington joining with later strikes before a ceasefire was declared. During both conflicts, Iranian nuclear sites were bombed repeatedly.

"If the agency wants to be part of a diplomatic solution, it must refrain from turning a technical report into a tool of political pressure," Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi wrote on X. In a confidential report seen by AFP on Thursday, the Iran International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) claimed that the lack of access to nuclear sites in Iran constitutes a "proliferation concern."

"While the agency acknowledged that the military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and sites have created an unprecedented situation, it is critical for the agency to conduct verification activities in Iran without delay," the IAEA said in the report.

The IAEA has never condemned the Israeli-American strikes on Iranian nuclear sites. Gharibabadi on Saturday said the Israel-

li-American strikes are "not only a violation of Iran's sovereignty," but also "a direct blow to nuclear safety."

"One cannot bomb safeguarded facilities, destroy the access and safety necessary for inspections, and then use the consequences of that very attack as a grievance against Iran," he argued.

Gharibabadi added that the agency cannot simultaneously report the effects of military attacks, overlook the responsibility of those who carried them out, and ask Iran to pay the technical and political cost of the insecurity created by the aggressors.

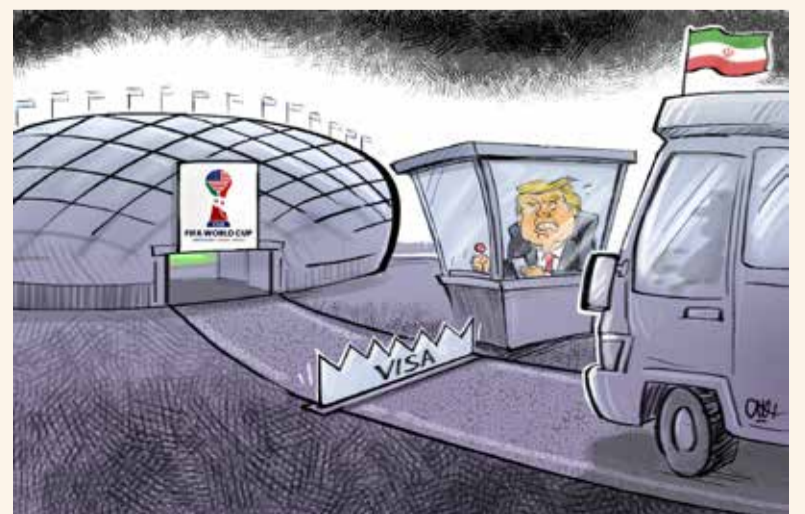
"This is neither verification nor confidence-building," he said.

Western countries, led by the US and Israel accuse Tehran of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. Iran denies having any such ambitions.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

### CARTOON



# Iran seeks accelerated trade, investment with India at SCO summit

## Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Mohammad Atabek, called for accelerated economic and investment cooperation with India during a meeting with India's Minister of Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) industry ministers' gathering in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

According to a statement from Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, the two sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation and remove obstacles facing economic operators, pointing to the significant untapped potential in Iran-India economic relations.

India has committed about \$370 million to develop and equip the strategic Chabahar Port, a project that provides New Delhi with critical access to Afghanistan and

Central Asia. However, India's 2026-27 budget included no new allocation for the Chabahar project, a move analysts link to pressure from US sanctions.

India's ONGC Videsh has also in the past proposed an investment package of around \$10 billion to develop the Farzad-B gas field and related LNG export facilities, though the project has not moved forward.

Atabak stressed the importance of strengthening mechanisms for joint cooperation and called for the early convening of the two countries' joint trade working group, describing it as an appropriate platform for following up on agreements, identifying new areas of cooperation and increasing the volume of economic exchanges.

The Iranian minister also underscored the need to facilitate the issuance of business visas for economic actors from both

countries, saying easier travel for traders and investors could play an important role in expanding economic ties and increasing private-sector interaction.

The two sides also emphasized expanding direct flight connections between major cities in Iran and India, saying that increasing direct flights and achieving greater balance in bilateral air links could help promote tourism, facilitate business travel and expand economic and cultural cooperation.

They also agreed to continue consultations and strengthen cooperation across various economic and trade sectors while making maximum use of existing capacities to elevate the level of Iran-India relations.

Atabak, who is leading an official delegation at the SCO industry ministers' meeting in Bishkek, said on Friday that all industry ministers from the organization's member states were participating



Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Mohammad Atabek (4th R) meets India's Minister of Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy (4th L) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on June 6, 2026. [mimt.gov.ir](http://mimt.gov.ir)

in this round of talks and that Iran had adopted an active approach focused on expanding relations and identifying shared opportunities and areas of cooperation with other members.

He also stressed the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation among independent coun-

tries and expressed hope that financial and economic exchanges among SCO members and other regional groupings that support multilateralism would increase further, creating conditions to reduce dependence on financial mechanisms under the influence of dominant powers.

**Iran greenlights 90 foreign investment proposals valued at \$617m**

## Economy Desk

Iran's Foreign Investment Board approved 90 proposals worth \$617 million during the first two meetings of the panel in the current Iranian year, which began on March 21, state media reported. According to Tasnim news agency, the board approved 50 investment projects worth \$491 million at its 305th meeting, which was the second session of the year.

During the meeting, the board reviewed 55 foreign investment applications across various sectors of the economy, including renewable energy production and the construction of solar power plants, food, pharmaceuticals and health-care, rail and maritime transportation, textiles, services and other industrial sectors.

It ultimately approved 50 investment projects valued at \$491 million.

The Foreign Investment Board holds monthly meetings at the investment organization, where numerous foreign investment applications are reviewed and approved.

Iran's Foreign Investment Board approved 35 foreign investment proposals worth \$126 million in its first session of the new year that began on March 21.

The board held its 304th meeting — and the first of the new year — on Monday.

The approved projects involve investors from Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, the Netherlands, China, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Oman, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Armenia, as well as Iranians residing abroad.

According to statistics released by the Ministry of Economy and Finance on March 18, the value of foreign investment projects in Iran's free trade zones rose by 531% in the first 11 months of the last year (began on March 21, 2025), while realized foreign investment grew by 268%. The ministry said at the time that domestic investment attracted in free zones increased by 125% during the same period, while realized domestic investment rose by 36%. Exports from free zones increased by 14%, and the value of production in these regions grew by 28%.

## E-Commerce slams anti-crypto bans as blow to global digital community

### Economy Desk

Tehran E-Commerce Association said US sanctions on Iranian cryptocurrency exchanges run counter to the "spirit of the international crypto community," according to a statement reported by state media.

The association said millions of Iranian citizens use domestic crypto exchanges, which in recent years have sought to provide users with access to global digital economy tools and the borderless nature of cryptocurrencies. It added that the development of modern financial technologies is a key pillar of the country's digital economy and an important driver of growth, job creation and talent retention, state news agency ISNA reported.

The Office of Foreign Assets Control on Tuesday added Iran's



four largest cryptocurrency exchanges — Nobitex, Wallex, Bitpin and Ramzinex — to its sanctions list under a new round of measures against Tehran. The sanctions also target several Nobitex executives. OFAC said the platforms were used to help the Iranian government and sanctioned entities bypass Western sanctions.

The statement said the sanctions imposed by the US Department of the Treasury on the four crypto exchanges contradict the foundational principles of blockchain technology and the right of ordinary Iranian users to access new financial tools. It said decentralized tech-

nologies are based on free and universal access, and described the move as contrary to the spirit of the global crypto community.

It added that the domestic blockchain and crypto sector has, despite structural constraints and restrictive regulatory approaches, provided a secure platform for daily financial transactions for millions of Iranians. It said cryptocurrencies are now widely used to preserve asset value and facilitate daily life, adding that linking the sector to geopolitical tensions unfairly undermines the rights of Iranian users.

The association also said such develop-

ments underscore the need for a fundamental shift in domestic regulatory attitudes toward innovative industries, urging policymakers to support rather than hinder the sector amid increasing external pressure on innovation-driven industries.

It said it condemns the US Treasury action against private-sector platforms and the restriction of Iranian citizens' rights, adding that it would pursue legal steps through domestic and international channels to lift the sanctions.

The Information and Communications Technology Guild Organization (Nasr) and the four sanctioned exchanges have said the measures would not affect user assets or disrupt services, adding that the sanctions had been anticipated and safeguards were already in place.

## Tehran, Kabul eye rail corridor expansion, mining ties

### Economy Desk

Tehran and Kabul emphasized the development of rail corridors, joint mining investments and technical knowledge transfer during a joint meeting focused on strengthening economic cooperation.

The meeting, held in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad, brought together senior officials from Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, Afghanistan's Ministry of Industries and Mines, and economic actors from both countries, ILNA reported on Saturday.

The two sides stressed the importance of developing rail transport corridors as one of the most critical infrastructures for facilitating regional trade, and examined existing capacities for connecting and expanding the two countries' transpor-



IRNA

tation networks. Joint investment opportunities in Afghanistan's mining sector, particularly in exploration, extraction and mineral processing, were among the key topics of the summit.

Saeed Zarandi, CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company, affirmed the group's readiness to participate in Afghanistan's development projects, transfer technical knowledge and cooperate on infrastructure and mining initiatives.

Noting Mobarakeh Steel's capabilities and experience in

the mining value chain and mineral industries, Zarandi said the development of transport infrastructure, particularly rail networks, could pave the way for increased trade exchanges, reduced logistics costs and strengthened economic ties in the region.

"The synergy between Afghanistan's mining capacities and Iran's industrial capabilities will create valuable opportunities for economic growth, job creation and sustainable development in both countries," he added.

## Lebanese officials swayed ...

Had this movement not existed, large parts of Beirut's southern suburbs and surrounding areas would likely have fallen under Israeli occupation by now.

This situation highlights divisions within Lebanon's ruling structure. Ultimately, the objective of the United States and Israel is to create internal discord in Lebanon that could escalate into civil conflict, allowing Israel to push further toward Beirut under the pretext that Lebanon has become unstable and insecure.

**Lebanese officials have accused Iran of using Lebanon as leverage in its negotiations and regional disputes. To what extent does this claim reflect the reality of Iran's regional policy, and what arguments does Tehran offer in rejecting such a perception?**

The Lebanese case has no particular characteristics that would allow it to have significant influence over the course of negotiations between Iran and the United States.

On the contrary, Iran has been supporting Lebanon while it could have separated the Lebanese issue from broader regional developments and negotiations. However, Tehran takes an emotional and humanitarian view toward the people of southern Lebanon, who are under pressure on multiple fronts—by the Israeli military, by certain political currents within Lebanon, and by some Arab governments. As a result, they often find themselves isolated and look to Iran for support.

Iran has sought to assist the Lebanese people, regardless of sectarian affiliation, to the greatest extent possible.

Tehran has repeatedly stated that it will not accept any ceasefire arrangement that does not include a durable ceasefire in southern Lebanon. This reflects what Iran sees as a humanitarian and emotional bond between the Iranian and Lebanese peoples.

Unfortunately, some political currents and several Arab governments are actively seeking to drive a wedge between Lebanon and Iran.

**In light of Beirut's recent positions, is Iran likely to reconsider its strategy toward Lebanon and its support for Hezbollah, or will it continue to adhere to its existing approach?**

Preserving security in southern Lebanon and strengthening regional resistance movements remain integral components of Iran's broader regional strategy.

Under no circumstances will Iran abandon the people of southern Lebanon. There is a deep bond between the Iranian and Lebanese peoples, and external pressure will not lead Hezbollah to hand over its weapons.

If Hezbollah were disarmed, the killing of Shiites would begin at the hands of both certain internal factions and the Israeli military.

Iran understands very well that if it leaves the Lebanese people on their own, they will become victims of sectarian attitudes and both regional and domestic violence.

**Some argue that Iran's support for Hezbollah is not merely a function of bilateral relations with Lebanon, but also forms part of Tehran's broader regional deterrence strategy against**

**Israel. To what extent does this consideration influence Iran's decision to continue supporting this group?**

Lebanon—and more specifically the Lebanese Islamic Resistance—constitutes a central pillar of the Axis of Resistance.

Had Hezbollah not existed, the Israeli regime would likely have occupied substantial parts of Syria, Jordan, and even Egypt by now.

Because of Hezbollah's deterrent capabilities, and because the Israeli military has been engaged with the movement for more than four decades, neighboring countries have been able to benefit from a degree of relative stability.

As a result, much of the burden of confronting Israeli actions against regional populations has fallen on Hezbollah's shoulders.

# Iran-US MoU to manage conflict, not end it

## INTERVIEW

The signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Iran and the United States constitutes the most paramount development, for which not only the region but also the world, in a certain sense, awaits with bated breath. Nevertheless, the vicissitudes and fluctuations along the path of achieving this understanding, given the parameters governing Tehran-Washington relations, have induced some analysts to predict the signing of this memorandum as extremely close and others as extremely remote.

According to statements made by Abbas Araghchi, Iran's minister of foreign affairs, negotiations between the two countries are currently underway to arrive at an understanding. The examination of this memorandum of understanding within various capitals proceeds slowly for numerous reasons, among which the most significant are the absence of decisive resolution within the White House and the hesitations confronting Donald Trump as he contemplates this decision. Decisions, each of whose adoption will entail particular repercussions and consequences for his political future, as well as for the interests of the United States and Washington's regional and extra-regional allies.

Trump's perplexity in arriving at a definitive and consistent position has caused analysts, in their assessment of this approach, to scrutinize diverse scenarios, the spectrum of which extends from economic rationales to pervasive psychological pressures.

In order to investigate the factors that have induced indecision in the US president and slowed the negotiation process, an interview was conducted with Rahman Ghahremanpour, an analyst of international affairs.

Rahman Ghahremanpour



The process of message exchange between Iran and the United States is characterized by sluggishness. Considering that this process is consequential for nearly the entire world, what are the causes of these protracted interruptions? The spokesperson for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs identifies the approach of the American president and the incessant revisions of the draft as the principal impediment. What is your analytical assessment in this regard?

**GHAHREMANPOUR:** The optimistic answer to the question is that, given the profound disagreements existing between the two parties, sluggishness in the exchange of messages is a natural phenomenon. Furthermore, negotiations are not conducted directly, and Iran typically transmits these messages through intermediaries and facilitators; hence, this delay and sluggishness are natural. However, if we were to adopt a pessimistic perspective, one could assert that perhaps this delay in message transmission and information exchange serves to enable the United States and Iran to compensate for their respective deficiencies in military combat and to prepare for another war.

In any case, to render a judgment on this matter, we must ascertain whether precise information exists or not. Currently, we do not possess precise and publicly available information explaining why Trump is acting with delay and why, despite having expressed satisfaction with the agreement, he refrained from signing it recently.

**Decision-making for the American president regarding the war with Iran has, at least superficially, become difficult. Is Trump incapable of deciding? Or does indecisiveness and the current condition constitute a component of his primary strategy?**

The reality is that he, like any other politician, is subjected to multiple and contradictory pressures. On one hand, Democrats, on the eve of the congressional midterm elections, repeatedly proclaim that Trump has been defeated in the war with Iran, that he has, contrary to his campaign promises, embroiled the United States in another war, that he has been deceived by Netanyahu's rhetoric, and similar allegations.

On the other hand, ultraconservative Republicans such as Lindsey Graham and others exert pressure upon Trump to initiate another war and bring the matter to a conclusive end. Moreover, at the regional level, some American allies, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, desire that the United States not commence another war, whereas other allies, such as Israel, desire that the United States enter another war once more.

Furthermore, economic considerations and the impact of this crisis upon the global economy constitute another variable influencing Trump's decision. According to a report by the International Energy Agency, the consequences of the Strait of Hormuz blockade and the world's energy reserves will reach a dangerous phase within the coming month; therefore, if this trend continues, the price of oil may increase substantially. This, too, represents a concern for the United States.

On the other hand, we know that the



The illustration shows, from left to right: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, US President Donald Trump, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

● STEPHEN P. KELLY/GETTY IMAGES

interest rate on United States Treasury bonds has increased, and this indicates a rise in long-term inflationary expectations within the United States, which is not favorable news for Trump. Hence, theoretically, one can comprehend why Trump cannot decide with ease.

**Some believe that Trump's strategy for postponing the memorandum of understanding consists of gradually reopening the Strait of Hormuz through targeted military strikes. Would such a strategy, given that Iran also responds to those strikes and that the primary losers are the regional countries, prove efficacious?**

Whether Trump intends to reopen the Strait of Hormuz through limited military actions, or in other words through a "liberation project," currently remains ambiguous. Among the ambiguities is the fact that, if this action, namely a rapid liberation operation, is not executed successfully, it could itself transform into a protracted crisis, contrary to its original objective.

In other words, if Trump's objective is that the Strait of Hormuz be reopened and the global economy attain a stage of confidence, a conflict that becomes prolonged could exacerbate uncertainty within the global economy and markets. A third factor of importance to Trump is the non-participation of Europe and NATO in this operation, a circumstance that could escalate costs for the United States.

**Assuming the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States — which the American secretary of state also considers not very distant — which scenarios from the United States should we anticipate? Or, fundamentally, is a definitive cessation of war and the withdrawal of American forces from the Persian Gulf (the forces augmented since the February war) even possible, given all the disagreements between the two countries? Or will these tensions recur intermittently?**

What is currently under discussion is, in fact, a provisional agreement or a memorandum of understanding for the continuation of the status quo and the perpetuation of a cease-fire, which does not necessarily mean the attainment of a durable agreement, nor necessarily means war. In effect, this memorandum of understanding extends the status quo so that the two parties may discover an honorable resolution for exiting this conflict because defeat would entail consequences for both sides. Neither does the United States wish to be perceived as defeated in this war, nor does the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Therefore, if the memorandum of understanding is signed, the two parties will have an additional two months to arrive, through practical action and via message exchange, mediation, and reassessment of their respective capabilities and resilience, at the conclusion of what constitutes the most appropriate path for exiting the existing conflict.

**The Israeli regime and Netanyahu, in particular, are evidently the most significant obstacles to arriving at an understanding at this juncture. Will Trump be capable of restraining the Israeli prime minister? And if not, what future can be imagine for any peace process in the region?**

If Iran and the United States succeed in reaching a durable agreement, the United States can restrain Israel. Indeed, during the Barack Obama era, we witnessed that Benjamin Netanyahu's efforts to dismantle the JCPOA did not succeed. Israel, because of its special relationship with the United States and also because of the intertwinement of security and political considerations between the United States and Israel, cannot act entirely contrary to Washington's wishes. In the past, whenever disagreements between the two parties have been serious, Tel Aviv has typically preferred to retreat.

Hence, in this instance as well, Israel's behavior will depend on the type of Iran-US agreement, as well as of that agreement's durability and stability. Indeed, within Israel, there exist groups that believe that, if Trump reaches an agreement with Iran, Israel will have no choice but to accept it and should not endeavor to destroy that agreement because doing so would, in effect, threaten American interests in the region.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., shrugs as he and the GOP leadership talk about a resolution to limit the US president's war powers, during a news conference at the Capitol in Washington, on March 4, 2026.

● J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

# Trump's art of the deal meets Iran's long memory of foreign exploitation



By **Tanya Goudsouzian**  
Former opinion editor at  
Al Jazeera English

By **Ibrahim Al-Marashi**

Scholar, author



## OPINION

As the government's standing plummets to an all-time low due to a reckless disregard for the welfare of its people, mass protests sweep across major Iran's cities, including Shiraz, Tabriz and Tehran. Driven by a threat to their economic survival, the merchant class, or bazaaris, are leading the demonstrations.

This is not a news report from December 2025. This is the spring of 1891, the opening salvos of the Persian Tobacco Protest. Recognizing that unfettered concessions to foreigners pose a threat to both national sovereignty and their own economic interests, the powerful Shia clergy joined the merchants in an open revolt. It was Iran's first bitter lesson in what happens when a ruler, namely Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar, sells out the nation to ensure his own political survival. It wouldn't be the last.

Iranians know their history well, especially when it comes to confronting foreign aggressors. Amid whispers of diplomatic backchannels and leaks about potential deals, Iranian officials have taken to the social media platform X to send cryptic, and at times humorous, references to past triumphs. Most notably, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei invoked the Sasanian Empire's victory over Roman Emperor Philip the Arab, when Rome was forced to accept peace on Persian terms in the 3rd century.

But make no mistake: these posts are not cautionary tales directed at the United States and Israel alone. They can also be read as stern warnings to Tehran's own negotiators. Any concessions, or capitulations, made by the Islamic Republic can trigger severe domestic backlash because in the Iranian historical imagination, yielding an inch inevitably leads to Western exploitation and destabilizing protests. For Iran's hardliners, a deal is tantamount to surrender.

This mindset can be traced to what Hamid Dabashi, professor of Iranian studies and comparative literature at Columbia University, describes as a "long historical memory, which is very much alive and resonant in their contemporary politics". According to Dabashi, even the current ruling government is "entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding that memory".

Two examples of historical violations of Iran's economic sovereignty illustrate why this memory remains so potent today. The French, Russian and British empires all vied with each other to extract concessions from Iran in the late 19th century. In 1890, the Qajar Shah granted British entrepreneur Major G.F. Talbot total control over the cultivation, sale and export of Iranian tobacco. Britain had already forced the opium trade on China and fought a war when its emperor tried to ban its sale decades earlier. By commodifying a daily staple in Iran, the secret deal ignited the tobacco riots, uniting merchants and the Shia clergy in a boycott of the drug, this time leading to a successful campaign to force the Shah to cancel the concession.

The D'Arcy Concession would later allow the British government, at the direction of then-Lord of the Navy Winston Churchill, to establish an "Anglo-Iranian Oil Company," today's British Petroleum, in 1911. The company would later control 84% of Iran's oil profits. When prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh nationalized that wealth in 1951, the response was an Anglo-American-backed coup in 1953 that reinstated the shah's absolute royal rule.



A man walks past a mural painted on the outer walls of the former US Embassy in Tehran, colloquially-referred to as the "Spy Den," on February 1, 2026.

● AFP



Cutting through the rhetorical noise from both sides, it would be politically suicidal for any Iranian government to accept the full terms the US and Israel are attempting to impose. The White House is pushing for an expansive, face-saving surrender that demands Iran give up its 60% enriched uranium, halt its missile program, dismantle its regional alliances and permanently relinquish state control over the Strait of Hormuz. For Tehran, these are contemporary equivalents of the 19th-century concessions and non-negotiable pillars of national defense that cannot be bartered away.



A crowd of demonstrators tears down the sign of the Iran Party, part of then-prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh's National Front, at its headquarters in August 19, 1953 during the US-backed coup d'état.

● AP

The suppression of Iranian independence sowed decades of popular resentment against Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, ultimately erupting in the 1979 Iranian Revolution. For Iranian nationalists, these episodes prove that concessions to foreign entities inevitably lead to intelligence infiltration and total loss of sovereignty.

It is this legacy that Western powers tend to misjudge. As Dabashi points out, "the most significant part of Iranian anticolonial nationalism" that the US and Israel have failed to understand is that these two formative episodes "have been paramount in the minds of all Iranians since this war began, and it informs every single sentence in their negotiations with United States".

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More significantly, despite domestic hardships, Tehran retains significant leverage, holding the global energy market hostage through its grip on Hormuz and still waving the disruptive wildcard of the Red Sea

via its alliance with the Ansarullah (Houthis). To concede the inconceivable when they have weathered the initial military onslaught would not be in their interest and would completely undermine the regime's narrative of resistance.

Some former US officials have acknowledged this problem. As former CIA director Bill Burns noted in an interview with *The Economist*, "We've kind of boxed ourselves in at this point. You can declare victory and walk away, but with the future of the Strait of Hormuz up in the air, it's hard to make that a plausible option."

He argued that escalation through blockades and infrastructure strikes alone would be unlikely to force "this hard-bitten regime to run up the white flag," leaving serious diplomacy backed by leverage as the "least bad" remaining option. The more difficult challenge, he suggested, would be the future of the Strait of Hormuz itself. Having rediscovered the immense strategic leverage the waterway provides, Tehran is unlikely to relinquish influence over it willingly.

The realistic path to a settlement lies in a formulation where both sides can claim victory without crossing their respective red lines. Iran enters the room with a clear objective of clawing back its frozen funds and assets, which remains the primary leverage the United States wields. A viable middle ground requires Washington to narrow its sights to a strict nuclear framework, temporarily shelving its demands for regional disarmament or the integration of the Abraham Accords.

Still, the path forward will depend on who has the luxury of time. Tehran has historically counted on American impatience to force a diplomatic breakthrough, but President Donald Trump seems to be in no rush. He recently shrugged off domestic political pressure, saying "I don't care about the midterms," and that he could "out-wait" the Iranians.

Recent history suggests that a drawn-out dispute is more likely than a rapid resolution. The Russia-Ukraine war has stretched over five years without a peace deal, the Doha accords required 18 months, the original Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or "Iran Deal" took 20 months, and the Paris Peace Talks after World War I dragged on for nearly five years. By contrast, the current war began just three months ago.

Tehran can afford to sit at the table, but it can only concede up to the point where its core interests remain intact. To cross that red line would mean repeating the fatal mistakes of the Qajar and Pahlavi shahs, sparking severe domestic backlash.

The lessons of Talbot's tobacco monopoly and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's oil exploitation remain absolute truths for the current leadership. Trump may view these talks as a standard business transaction, but history has taught Iran that a compromise with the West is a trap where the foreign superpower always walks away with the ultimate prize.

The article first appeared on *Responsible Statecraft*.



## Sports Desk

All players in the Iranian national team squad have been granted entry visas by the United States for the upcoming FIFA World Cup – co-hosted by the U.S., Mexico, and Canada from June 11.

US Ambassador to Turkey Tom Barrack confirmed the visa approvals in a message on X on Friday, just 10 days before Team Melli's opening match in Group G against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, California. It will be the first iteration of the competition to see a host nation receive the team of a country it is at war with.

The news ended Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee's concerns over the availability of players who have completed their military service with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Tuesday there was "no problem" with the Iran squad entering the country, but Washington would not allow technical and administrative staff with ties to the IRGC to accompany them.

Iranian Fars News Agency, citing The New York Times, reported on Saturday that visas for several members of the Iranian delegation – including Mahdi Taj, chairman of the Iranian Football Federation (FFIRI) and a former IRGC member – have not yet been issued.

# Iran squad cleared for US entry; staff denied visas for World Cup

The FFIRI confirmed the report later on Saturday, describing the visa denial as "a non-sporting and entirely political decision" and vowing to pursue the matter through FIFA.

"World football's governing body, as the responsible authority, is tasked with following up on and securing visas for the Iranian national team's managerial, administrative and technical staff.

"The host nation, through its discriminatory and targeted treatment of Iran's national football team, has created a biased and unequal environment, representing one of the clearest examples of political interference in sport," the statement added.

## US 'discriminatory treatment'

Iran on Saturday slammed World Cup host the United States over "discriminatory treatment" in not granting visas for some members of the Iranian delegation to the tournament.

"Why do you not say that visas were denied to a large portion of the managerial and executive



Iranian players are pictured ahead of a friendly against Mali in Antalya, Türkiye, on June 4, 2026.

staff, technical advisers, and others who are an integral part of any national football team?" the Iranian Embassy in Turkey said in a post on X, referring to an earlier announcement by US envoy Tom Barrack that visas had been granted to players.

"You have now escalated the deliberate and discriminatory treatment against Iran's national football team to its highest level," the embassy added.

Taj and two of his colleagues abandoned their onward trip to Vancouver for the 76th FIFA

Congress in May, following a clash with Canadian border officials in Toronto. While media reports suggested that immigration authorities denied the delegation entry into Canada, Taj insisted it was their own decision to leave the North Amer-

ican country after exhaustive questioning about his ties to the IRGC – which is listed by Canada and the United States as a "terrorist group" – and "offensive insults directed at the country's proud armed forces."

In late May, Iran moved its training base to Tijuana, Mexico, from Tucson, Arizona, which Taj said was due to visa problems. The Iranian squad left Antalya for Tijuana on Saturday, after two warm-up friendlies in the Turkish resort city.

Qalenoee's men came from behind to beat The Gambia 3-1 last week, before defeating Mali 2-0 courtesy of goals from Saeid Ezzatollahi and Ramin Rezaeian on either side of halftime on Thursday.

The lack of competitive action for the home-based players in the squad has been a major issue for Qalenoee to deal with, after the Iranian top-flight was called off following U.S.-Israeli airstrikes on Iran in February.

Team Melli will return to SoFi Stadium to take on European heavyweight Belgium on June 21, before traveling to Seattle, Washington, to face Egypt in their final group game at Lumen Field five days later.

With eight of the third-placed teams across the 12 groups advancing to the round of 32, Iran will fancy its chances of securing a first-ever knockout-stage berth at the seventh attempt.

## Asian Canoe Sprint Junior & U23 Championships: Iranians collect five medals on Day 3

## Sports Desk

The morning session of Day 3 at the Asian Canoe Sprint Junior & U23 Championships in Turkistan, Kazakhstan saw Iranians bag one silver and four bronzes across different categories on Saturday, taking the country's medal haul to 15. Iran's lone silver medal of the session came through Elias Bargi in the men's KL2 paracanoe final. The Iranian clocked 2:08.553 to finish second behind an Uzbek paddler, while another representative from Uzbekistan claimed bronze.



ICF

In the men's U23 K1 500m final, Abolfazl Jannati clocked 1:48.892 to finish third and claim the bronze medal behind competitors from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Nika Najafzadeh secured another bronze for Iran in the women's U23 K1 500m final. She posted a time of 2:04.587 to finish third, while paddlers from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan took gold and silver, respectively.

Iran's mixed U23 K2 500m duo of Nika Najafzadeh and Darioush Mohammadi also reached the podium, taking bronze in 1:49.042. Uzbekistan won gold, while Ka-

zakhstan finished second. In the men's U23 C1 500m final, Soheil Bayati crossed the line in 2:06.014 to place sixth. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and India occupied the podium places.

Maryam Aqaei added to Iran's medal count in the junior women's K1 500m final, earning bronze with a time of 2:06.827. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan claimed gold and silver, respectively.

Meanwhile, Nastaran Kheirollahi and Soheil Bayati narrowly missed out on a medal in the mixed U23 C2 500m final, placing fourth with a time of 2:19.038. Kazakhstan,

Uzbekistan and India claimed the top three positions.

In the men's KL3 500m paracanoe event, Masoud Qeysari finished sixth with a time of 2:10.743. Athletes from Uzbekistan and South Korea secured the medals. Saturday's results came after Iran had collected eight medals, including two golds, on the previous day of competition.

Saeid Hosseinpour won gold in the men's KL1 paracanoe final after clocking 58.436 seconds, while Eslam Jahedi also struck gold in the men's VL2 event, crossing the finish line in 1:03.389.

## Ulaanbaatar Open Ranking Series: Iranians bag five Greco-Roman medals, Keshtkar seals Worlds spot

## Sports Desk

Iran's Greco-Roman squad finished with five medals, including three golds, at the Ulaanbaatar Open, as Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar booked his place in the national team for October's World Championships after securing silver in the 63kg class at the third Ranking Series event of the international season.

Keshtkar was forced to withdraw from the final showdown against Kyrgyzstan's Zholaman Sharshenbekov due to a groin injury, having routed the two-time world champion and Olympic bronze medalist 10-1 when they met in Round 3 of the Nordic bracket earlier on Friday. Keshtkar's most significant win, however, came in the second round, where he defeated Asian silver medalist Erfan Jarkani 6-2 in an all-Iranian battle to punch his ticket for the world showcase. Jarkani, who began his campaign with a criteria loss (1-1) to Sharshenbekov, went on to beat India's Sunny Kumar by superiority but failed to progress to the semifinals and finished empty-handed.

"Thank God, after nine months away from competition, I made a strong return to action and achieved a decent result," Keshtkar said, adding: "My victory over renowned Sharshenbekov was extremely valuable for me from a psychological and mental standpoint."

"I suffered a groin strain in my very first bout, and as the competition progressed, the injury became more apparent, which is why, in coordination with the Wrestling Federation and the national team's medical staff, I decided not to compete in the final

in order to prevent the injury from worsening," added the Iranian, who will be eager to improve on last year's world bronze medal.

Elsewhere, Asian bronze medalist Ali Ahmadi-Vafa grabbed gold in the 60kg event, courtesy of a superiority win (10-0) against North Korea's Ro Yu-chol in the final.



Iranian wrestler Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar (blue) lifts Kyrgyzstan's Zholaman Sharshenbekov during a Greco-Roman 63kg bout at the Ulaanbaatar Open in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on June 5, 2026.

Ro, who won the Asian bronze last year, had no chance against the 21-year-old Iranian, who threw the North Korean for two four-point throws from par terre to accumulate nine points, before a lost challenge from Ro added the final point.

Ahmadi-Vafa will look to add a senior Worlds medal to his 2024 junior and U23 world golds, as well as the U17 title he won in 2022.

Friday's results came after Danial Sohrabi had booked his world spot thanks to a comeback 8-5 victory over fellow Iranian Mohammad-Javad Rezaei in a thrilling 72kg final the previous day in the Mongolian capital.

"My entire focus will now be on putting behind the disappointment of last year and achieving the best possible result for my country at the World Championships," said Sohrabi, who suffered a controversial quarterfinal setback against French wrestler Ibrahim Ghanem before rebounding to claim a con-

clusioned: "I competed in this tournament at only 40-50 percent of my fitness. Starting today, I am beginning a new phase of preparation for the world showcase."

Payam Ahmadi, meanwhile, enjoyed an emphatic run to the top podium in the 55kg class, throwing down the gauntlet to his opponents ahead of the World Championships – including Georgia's Vakhtang Lolua, who defeated Ahmadi in the final in Zagreb. The 20-year-old Iranian – a winner of junior world and Asian golds last year – outscored his opponents 33-0 across four bouts to claim the gold medal in the Nordic bracket, including a final victory (9-0) over Turkish wrestler Emin Cakir.

With Sohrabi and Keshtkar joining Ahmadi-Vafa, Ahmadi, reigning world and Olympic champions Saeid Esmaeili (67kg) and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg), Asian silver medalist Ali Oskou (77kg), world champion Gholamreza Farrokhi (82kg), and Alireza Mohmadi (87kg) – who has won consecutive world silver medals on either side of his Olympic silver at Paris 2024 – in the Iranian Greco-Roman squad for the Wrestling Worlds, the remaining spot up for grabs will be decided through a highly anticipated 130kg showdown between Amin Mirzazadeh and Fardin Hedayati at the International Takhti Cup, which begins on June 15 in Kerman.

Two-time world champion and Olympic bronze medalist Mirzazadeh will need a victory in a best-of-three contest against Hedayati, who is aiming for a breakthrough at senior level, having already collected three world titles across the U23 and junior age groups.

# Taftan's untouched landscapes pave way for ecotourism growth

## Iranica Desk

With its untouched landscapes, unique biodiversity and growing tourism potential, Taftan is emerging as a promising destination for nature-based and wellness tourism. Government and local authorities are working to improve infrastructure and transform the area into one of southeastern Iran's emerging tourism centers.

To help retain population in the southern foothills of Mount Taftan in south of Zahedan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, and capitalize on the region's vast tourism potential, officials say improving drinking water supplies, upgrading roads, strengthening tourism facilities and paving rural routes — particularly the Torshab to Kand-e Zard road — are among the key priorities, according to chtn.ir.

Torshab village, known for its untouched natural landscapes, apricot, pomegranate, fig and wild almond orchards, as well



as springs and seasonal waterfalls, has significant potential to attract visitors and become one of Iran's emerging ecotourism destinations.

More than 360 species of medicinal, edible and aromatic plants have been identified across the Taftan foothills. Some of these species are unique to the region and have potential for export and industrial use.

Government development plans

include promoting rural tourism, establishing eco-lodges, training local communities, and investing in the packaging and processing of medicinal plants as part of efforts to sustainably utilize the area's natural resources.

The governor of Khash said Torshab village, located in the town's central district on the slopes of volcanic Mount Taftan, attracts large numbers of tourists, nature enthusiasts and



● [kojaro.com](http://kojaro.com)

mountaineers from across Iran every year due to its diverse natural attractions.

Farshad Gorgich said that natural waterfalls, clear rivers, green valleys, springs and exceptional landscapes, combined with the region's pleasant climate, have turned the area into one of the important tourism destinations in southeastern Iran.

He added that the region's unique vegetation, including

wild almond trees, pistachio trees, wild figs and various plant species, has given Torshab a distinctive natural character and created strong opportunities for nature tourism and ecotourism development.

Gorgich further noted that Torshab's location on the slopes of Mount Taftan and its proximity to other natural and tourism attractions in Khash provide an opportunity to expand the tour-

ism industry, create sustainable employment and increase income for local communities.

He emphasized the need to further promote the area's natural attractions, saying that developing tourism infrastructure, improving access routes, creating visitor facilities and attracting private-sector investment are among the key plans for making better use of Torshab's tourism potential.

He said promoting the natural and historical attractions of Khash at the national level could play an important role in attracting domestic and international visitors and strengthening the regional economy.

He also highlighted that Khash, with Mount Taftan, its green mountain foothills, unique natural landscapes and the rich culture of local communities, has significant capacity to become one of eastern Iran's leading tourism centers.

Khash is located approximately 185 kilometers south of Zahedan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province.



● [chn.ir](http://chn.ir)

## Mesr village advances toward global tourism recognition

### Iranica Desk

Mesr, a historic village known as a jewel in the heart of Iran's desert, has taken a significant step toward international recognition thanks to its exceptional collection of indigenous handicrafts.

Amir Karamzadeh, Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Isfahan Province, said that traditional crafts including Zilu weaving, Givoh shoe-making, palm-leaf mat weaving, and the production of camel-wool clothing are among the cultural and livelihood traditions of this ancient village that play a key role in its nomination for the UN Tourism's

Best Tourism Villages program, chtn.ir wrote.

He added that these handicrafts, shaped by the creativity, skills, and deep adaptation of local communities to the desert environment, represent far more than economic and practical activities; they embody the cultural identity and centuries-old traditions of the region.

Karamzadeh noted that the distinctive designs and patterns of Zilu textiles, the quality and durability of Givoh footwear, the creativity of mat weaving using locally available materials, and the resilience of camel-wool garments all reflect the community's rich indigenous knowledge and its deep-rooted connection with

the land.

Experts believe that sustainable development and support for these traditional arts will not only contribute to preserving Mesr Village's tangible and intangible heritage but will also create sustainable employment opportunities, boost the local economy, promote cultural tourism, and help safeguard the village's traditional character.

Karamzadeh emphasized that recognition as one of the UN Tourism Best Tourism Villages would offer a valuable opportunity to introduce these remarkable handmade crafts to a global audience while strengthening the cultural and economic standing of the region.

## Qajar-Era Ardalan Castle faces urgent restoration crisis

### Iranica Desk

The head of Tuyserkan's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has warned that Ardalan Castle, a historic monument in Osharan village, requires urgent restoration due to severe deterioration. The castle is considered one of the valuable Qajar-era structures in Tuyserkan, Hamedan Province.

More than a century after its construction and nearly two decades after its national registration, the monument is now facing serious erosion and an immediate need for emergency conservation work, mehrnews.com wrote.

The castle has long been recognized as one of Hamedan Province's notable historic fortresses. Built in a strategic location on heights overlooking the village and along the old Hamadan-Tuyserkan route, the structure once stood on an important regional communication path. Historical accounts and local documents indicate that Arda-

lan Castle was built during the Qajar period and served both military and residential purposes. The complex features defensive elements, including towers, thick walls and multiple interior spaces, and once played an important role in controlling travel routes and protecting the surrounding area. Its location near Mount Khan Gormez further enhanced its geographic and defensive significance, placing it among the region's prominent historical landmarks.

However, the condition of the monument has significantly deteriorated in recent years. The passage of time, climatic conditions, rainfall and the lack of continuous professional restoration have caused severe erosion in parts of the castle. Field assessments indicate that some walls and structural sections are in critical condition, raising concerns over the possible collapse of parts of the building if deterioration continues.

Although restoration work was carried out on sections of the castle in 2017, the large scale of

the structure and limited funding meant that the efforts were restricted to partial repairs and failed to stop the overall decline. As a result, heritage experts have once again raised concerns and emphasized the urgent need for comprehensive restoration.

Mohammad Ahmadi, head of Tuyserkan's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said that emergency restoration of sections at risk of collapse has been placed on the agenda and will be carried out this year if the necessary funds are allocated.

He added that the proper restoration and revival of the site could help attract tourists and turn Ardalan Castle into one of the main pillars of tourism development in Tuyserkan.

Ahmadi also pointed to the village's broader tourism potential, noting that despite its natural and historical attractions, Osharan currently lacks eco-tourism accommodation facilities. Establishing such infrastructure, he said, could boost



● [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)

tourism, create employment opportunities and contribute to reverse migration in the area. Experts believe that expanding eco-tourism alongside the restoration of historical sites can play

an important role in preserving the cultural identity of villages and strengthening local economies — a need that has become increasingly important for Osharan. The future of Osharan's his-

toric castle depends largely on securing funding and carrying out immediate restoration measures; failure to act could result in the loss of one of the region's most important heritage sites.

# Qamishloo-Dalankouh added to UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Network

UNESCO officially added Iran's Qamishloo-Dalankouh Biosphere Reserve in Isfahan province to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, bringing the total number of Iranian biosphere reserves recognized by the UN cultural agency to 14.

The designation was approved by the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme during a meeting held in conjunction with World Environment Day on Friday, Press TV reported.

UNESCO announced that 14 new biosphere reserves across 14 countries had joined the global network this year, increasing the total number of registered sites worldwide to 797 across 145 countries.

Biosphere reserves are internationally recognized areas aimed at balancing biodiversity conservation with sustainable economic and social development.

Established under UNESCO's MAB Programme in 1971, the sites are intended to serve as living laboratories for environmental management, scientific research, and community-based development.

Messages from Iranian officials, including Vice President and head of the Department of Environment Shina Ansari and Isfahan Governor Mehdi Jamalnejad, were also presented following the approval, describing the registration as a national accomplishment in protecting Iran's natural heritage and advancing sustainable development goals.

The inclusion of Qamishloo-Dalankouh is regarded as a significant achievement for Iran's environmental sector, highlighting the ecological importance of the region and its potential for sustainable development, scientific cooperation, and biodiversity conservation, according to environmental experts.

Located in northwestern Isfahan province, the Qamishloo-Dalankouh reserve spans nearly 875,000 hectares and covers parts of seven counties: Golpayegan, Khansar, Chadegan, Shahin Shahr and Meymeh, Najafabad, Tiran and Karvan, Fereydan, and Fereydoonshahr.

The area combines mountainous ecosystems with steppe landscapes, creating one of the province's most diverse natural corridors.

According to Daryoush Gotalizadeh,

director general of the Department of Environment of Isfahan Province, the reserve integrates a wide range of ecological zones, including rocky habitats, mountain rangelands, seasonal waterways, and steppe ecosystems that are closely connected with the livelihoods and cultural traditions of local and nomadic communities.

In remarks published on April 14, Gotalizadeh explained that the reserve is designed around UNESCO's three-zone model of "core, buffer, and transition" areas.

The structure links several major protected regions, including Qamishloo National Park and Wildlife Refuge, the Dalankouh Protected Area, and the Setbeleh and Golestankouh no-hunting zones.

"The integrated framework could strengthen wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity while also improving scientific monitoring, coordinated land management, and conservation-oriented governance across the wider landscape," Gotalizadeh was quoted as saying by Mehr news agency.

He also pointed to the economic opportunities associated with the UNESCO



designation, particularly in the field of sustainable and community-based tourism.

"Expanding eco-tourism routes, supporting ecotourism, and promoting local cultural and natural attractions could help strengthen the local economy while preserving the region's environmental heritage," he said.

The official further emphasized the potential for international branding of local products such as honey, medicinal plants, handicrafts, and traditional textiles, noting that the initiative could help preserve added value within local communities and reinforce the link between environmental protection and sustainable livelihoods.

## Iran launches tourism investment push to fuel sector revival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran will establish a dedicated Tourism Investment Support Headquarters and expand digital infrastructure in rural areas as part of a plan to accelerate tourism-led growth, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Saturday, signaling a renewed push to strengthen the sector's contribution to economic development and cultural diplomacy. Speaking at separate meetings with tourism investors and Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi in Tehran, Salehi-Amiri said the government views tourism infrastructure and investment as key drivers of growth, national prestige and international engagement, CHTN reported.

"We believe tourism will experience significant growth in the post-war period," Salehi-Amiri said. "From today, we must prepare the ground for investment, infrastructure development and greater capacity to welcome visitors."

The minister announced the for-

mation of a Tourism Investment Support Headquarters within the ministry and said one day each week would be devoted exclusively to resolving investors' concerns and removing administrative hurdles.

More than 3,000 tourism projects are currently under development across the country, including 561 hotels under construction, reflecting what officials described as strong private-sector confidence in Iran's tourism potential. Ali-Asghar Shalabafian, head of the ministry's investment center, said 3,017 tourism projects were underway, with Tehran, Khorasan Razavi and Isfahan accounting for the largest share.

Salehi-Amiri identified the Makran coast and marine tourism as among the country's foremost investment priorities, adding that support packages and incentives had been prepared to attract new capital and expedite project implementation.

In a parallel effort to broaden tourism's economic footprint, the ministry and the Communications Ministry are drafting a joint program linking high-speed

internet, rural tourism and handicrafts to job creation and reverse migration.

"The future of rural development depends on connecting local economies, tourism, handicrafts and modern communication technologies," Salehi-Amiri said. "Employment and connectivity are the two wings of rural development."

He said strategies centered on "one eco-lodge in every village" and "one family handicrafts workshop in every village" would help generate sustainable employment and revive local economies.

The minister noted that around 4.7 million travelers visited Iranian villages during the Nowruz holidays this year, describing the trend as evidence of growing demand for authentic cultural experiences, nature-based tourism and rural lifestyles.

"If we effectively link employment, tourism, handicrafts and communications infrastructure," he said, "Iran's villages can emerge over the next decade as dynamic centers of living, production and investment."

## Zayandeh Rud revival rekindles Isfahan tourism

Social Desk

Water has returned to the historic Zayandeh Rud, and Isfahan authorities expect the river's revival to help draw visitors back to one of Iran's foremost cultural destinations, Governor General Mehdi Jamalnejad said on Saturday as officials reopened gates at the Zayandeh Rud Dam. Jamalnejad said the river would carry water intermittently over the next three months under a planned release program, restoring a defining feature of the central Iranian city and breathing fresh life into its tourism sector, IRNA reported.

The renewed flow has transformed the cityscape, reviving the river that has long served as a cultural and historical emblem of Isfahan. Beyond its environmental benefits, the governor general said, the return of water is expected to



boost public morale, encourage social interaction and enhance the visitor experience across the city.

To capitalize on the development, provincial authorities have rolled out incentives aimed at attracting domestic travelers. Hotels and accommodation centers are operating at full capacity and offering special discounts, while additional tourism, shopping and visitor services have been prepared to support an anticipated rise in arrivals.

Jamalnejad invited travelers from across the country to visit Isfahan and communities along the Zayandeh Rud corridor, describing the com-

ing months as a rare opportunity to witness the river's renewed vitality and the city's celebrated architectural landscape. Known for its UNESCO-listed heritage, grand Safavid-era monuments and renowned handicrafts, Isfahan remains one of Iran's most visited destinations.

The river's return will further strengthen the city's appeal, helping tourism-related businesses benefit from increased visitor spending. Jamalnejad said historical sites, cultural venues and tourism infrastructure across the province were fully prepared to receive domestic and international visitors, adding that no restrictions were in place for travelers.

"With the Zayandeh Rud flowing once again, Isfahan is ready to welcome guests with all its cultural, historical and tourism capacities," he said.

## Tehran calls on ILO to spearhead global action against war

Social Desk

Iran's Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare Ahmad Meydari urged the International Labor Organization (ILO) to take the lead in preventing armed conflicts, telling the 114th International Labor Conference in Geneva that war poses the gravest threat to workers, social justice and human dignity worldwide.

Addressing delegates via videoconference, Meydari said wars destroy jobs, fracture families, devastate communities and place

workers across the world at risk. He called on the ILO to move beyond documenting the human cost of conflicts and play a more active role in preventing them, Tasnim News Agency reported. Invoking the ILO's founding principles and the Declaration of Philadelphia, he said peace and social justice remain the twin pillars of workers' welfare and global prosperity.

Meydari proposed that the ILO Director-General convene a special conference next year under the theme "War and the

Workers of the World", arguing that the international labor body should mobilize its full capacity to confront what he described as the greatest obstacle to decent work.

"Wars may begin against oppressed nations, but their flames ultimately engulf everyone," he said, warning that workers on every continent ultimately bear the economic and social consequences of conflict.

The minister also praised trade unions that have condemned what he described

as aggression and acts of terror against Iran, saying labor organizations should remain on "the right side of history" in defending peace and workers' rights.

Drawing parallels between the suffering caused by war and other social injustices, Meydari said the international community must show the same determination in opposing conflict as it does in combating child labor and discrimination against women.

He called for global solidarity, urging governments, workers and employers to



unite against war and what he termed "war capitalism", saying indifference to conflict ultimately threatens humanity as a whole.